

# NEWS *Child Nutrition*

CACFP EDITION

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## **Standards and Policies About Food**

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**T**hink about times that children and adults in day care are exposed to food other than what is prepared for them for meals and snacks. Are healthy choices available for celebrations and parties? Are staff eating with those in care and eating the same food? Standards and policies regarding food helps caregivers assure that children and adults in care have healthy food choices, which in turn helps those children and adults develop healthy eating habits.

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## ► From the Director's Desk

### Choosing to Be the Solution

A widely quoted slogan from the 1960's declared "If you're not part of the solution, you're part of the problem." I thought of this phrase during a recent conversation with a day care center director about the problem of what food items to sell at the Fall Festival, the center's annual fundraising event. There were many competing interests involved in the controversy, as well as strongly held beliefs – and some practical considerations, too. Opinions in this day care community ranged from "We aren't the nutrition police!" to "How can we care so little for our children's health?"

In order to create a healthy nutrition environment it is necessary to take into account the foods served as part of the CACFP as well as the messages – the overt ones and the unintended ones – that children receive from the decisions and actions of adults. The food service program has a large role to play in modeling healthy meals, serving appealing and nutritious foods, and providing a daily nutrition education laboratory where children practice healthy eating behaviors. But the food service program is only one component of the nutrition environment. Special parties and fund raising events are part of the nutrition environment as well.

What advice did I give to the beleaguered director? Fortunately, there were answers to be found in the past several issues of this newsletter:

- 1. Taking the time to develop a nutrition policy for the center.** This will ensure that the board, parents, and staff will have an opportunity to consider – and perhaps debate – the values they have in regards to nutrition, children's health and the role of the daycare program in promoting healthy eating habits. With the policy in place, decisions about specific activities and food choices are much clearer.
- 2. Finding allies.** The center director and staff may find it helpful to reach out to the larger community for information and advice. The local hospital's dietitian, a pediatrician, or other health professional can provide concrete suggestions about promoting healthy eating behaviors. They may also be available to provide workshops or reading materials to help parents support healthy eating behaviors at home.
- 3. Making nutrition education a priority.** Nutrition education is a vital role for the center staff and for parents. Nutrition education needs to include both age-appropriate factual information and the opportunity for daily practice to make the nutrition information a part of the children's lives. For example, children need to know why healthy snacks are important and what constitutes a healthy snack. But they also need to have that nutrition education message reinforced by the actual food made available in the day care environment.

With the news all around us indicating that Americans – both children and adults – are facing long term health problems because of increased rates of obesity, diabetes and hypertension, caring adults must begin to tackle the hard choices that can lead to a solution.

– Jo Busha, State Director

## ➤ *Focus on the Nutrition Environment*

### “Other Foods” in Your Daycare Setting

**S**o your daycare participates in the Child & Adult Care Food Program. You plan menus that include a wide variety of healthful foods. The cook uses preparation and handling procedures to ensure that vitamins and minerals are not lost and that fat and salt are not added during cooking. Is this all that is required to ensure a quality, nutrition environment? For most daycare situations, the answer to this question is no. Many times there are other foods in the daycare that the director, cook, or other staff may feel they have little control over.

**Meals from home.** In adult care centers participating in CACFP, the food is generally provided by the center. However, childcare centers may provide only snacks and require families to provide lunches for their children. This results in a wide variety of food items at the lunch tables. Some of these may be healthy choices, but most likely there are some that are not so healthy. How do you make sure the food that children bring in supports good nutrition practices?

**Staff lunches and behaviors.** The adults' attitude, behavior, and knowledge can make the difference between children enjoying mealtime and not, between being willing to try new foods and not, between selecting healthy foods and not, and so on. So it is important for caregivers to make the most of the opportunities for teaching about healthy food and beverage choices. If children form good eating habits at a young age, this will benefit them throughout their lives. And there are many opportunities to do this while they are in day care.

Those who plan and prepare food and those who interact with children all play critical roles in the attitudes children develop regarding food. When staff turn up their noses at what they are preparing or make negative comments about certain foods, that sends a message to those who will be eating the meal, particularly if they are young children. When staff does not sit down and eat at the table with the children or adults in care and do not eat the same food that is being served, this also sends a message. If children see adults snacking on chips and a soda, or

even having this at lunchtime, this also sends a message. And none of these messages are positive or supportive of establishing healthy eating habits. Serving a nutritious meal with a variety of healthful food choices is wonderful for the children, however they will receive a mixed message if their role models are exhibiting behaviors that do not support healthy eating.

Staff sitting down and eating with those in care provides many benefits, such as:

- ✓ Enabling staff to act as a role model for good eating habits.
- ✓ Ensuring that the children or adults in care are eating nutritious foods.
- ✓ Finding out about each child or adult's food likes and dislikes.
- ✓ Encouraging the children or adults in care to try new foods.

**Celebrations.** Holidays and birthdays are common reasons for special celebrations. There may also be times when families bring in food items to share in the festivities. **First, be sure that licensing guidelines are followed for food items supplied by others. In some programs and states, centers either do not allow parents to bring in food or have very specific guidelines that must be followed.** How can you assure that you get a fruit muffin served with a tray of colorful, cut-up fruit instead of a frosted cake or cupcake?

**Fundraisers.** Many centers hold fundraisers to generate revenue that will ultimately keep the cost of daycare services as low as possible. How many times are these activities bake sales, or the sale of candy and other items that have low nutritive value? Can you do something else to raise money besides an activity that focuses on foods that are high in fat and/or sugar?



## Developing a Nutrition Policy

If there is a nutrition policy in place, the questions raised in the previous section of this newsletter have easy answers. A nutrition policy is one way a child or adult care facility can implement practices to maximize nutritional status, minimize nutritional risk, model appropriate behavior regarding food, and teach about healthy food choices. The policy can be part of the enrollment packet for the care facility.

The policy can include not only the food items and procedures for the meal services provided by the facility, but it can also address food items that are brought into the center and appropriate activities for fund-raisers. The ultimate goal is to provide good choices and model healthy eating habits on a daily basis for the children and adults in day care.

Making changes cannot happen overnight. And it requires a broad base of support—parents, staff, and administrators. Dietitians, qualified medical professionals, and other individuals and groups in the community may also be helpful. Find out if the school in your community has a nutrition policy. If so, perhaps you can get some ideas from that. If not, and if you provide care for children, perhaps you can collaborate so that your policy supports the school policy and vice versa. The information on Action Planning in the April 2002 Issue of this newsletter can be used to initiate change.

Some specific areas a nutrition policy might include are:

- ✓ A description of all food services provided and the times of snacks and meals
- ✓ Nutrition standards of the Center
- ✓ If appropriate, nutritional information and guidelines concerning the content of meals to be provided by parents
- ✓ Expectations for the staff in modeling appropriate food-related behaviors and practices
- ✓ Food related purchasing requirements
- ✓ Food preparation and serving practices
- ✓ Nutrition education practices
- ✓ Parameters for fund-raising activities

Keep in mind that the intent of standards and policies should not be to prohibit food that has little or no nutritional value, but to educate children and adults in care about nutrition and healthy eating, and to provide healthy choices so they can practice what they learn.

## According to Ellyn Satter:

- ✓ Adults are responsible for the what, when and where of feeding,
- ✓ Children are responsible for the how much and whether of eating.

This division of responsibility is necessary for children to develop a healthy attitude about food. When adults take on the child's responsibility, mealtime can become a power struggle.

Ellyn Satter, MS, RD, CICSW, BCD, is a therapist, author and lecturer. Her books include *How to Get Your Kid to Eat...But Not Too Much* and *Feeding with Love and Good Sense*.



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Web site for Ellyn Satter, MS, RD, CICSW, BCD, [www.ellynsatter.com/](http://www.ellynsatter.com/)

## Sample Nutrition Policy

### FOOD PURCHASING

1. Food will be purchased that meets the standards for the Child and Adult Care Food Program.
2. Fresh produce will be purchased from local sources as frequently as possible.
3. When fruit juice is purchased, it will be 100% unsweetened juice, not a fruit drink.

### FOOD PREPARATION

1. Menus will be planned in advance, dated and posted in a prominent place.
2. The staff that is responsible for food service will be adequately trained in nutrition needs of infants and toddlers; appropriate food preparation techniques; and food safety and sanitation practices related to food preparation, storage, serving, and cleanup.
3. No foods will be deep fat fried.
4. Staff responsibilities for food service activities will not reduce staff/child ratios nor be allowed to interfere in other ways with the Center's program or supervision of children.

### MEAL SERVICE

1. Meals and snacks will be provided by the Center. Children in care are expected to participate.
2. Appropriately timed meals and snacks meeting nutritional and portion requirements of the Child and Adult Care Food Program, will be served. (See Attachment A for more information.)
3. Parents are encouraged to provide recipes for foods their children enjoy.
4. Reasonable accommodations will be made for vegetarian meals, religion requirements, and similar situations.
5. Special, therapeutic diets will be served by the Center only upon written instructions by a licensed physician.
6. Introducing new foods to infants will be made in consultation with parent(s).

### MEAL TIME

1. Meals will be served family style. Depending on the level of development, children will be encouraged to serve themselves.
2. Children will be encouraged but not forced to eat.
3. The Center will provide for the introduction of a variety of food textures and finger foods in the training of self-feeding.
4. The Center will encourage the use of a cup by toddlers.
5. Staff will eat with children at their tables and have the same food that is being served to the children.
6. Children will have sufficient time to finish their meal or snack.
7. Appropriate behavior at the table will be stressed during mealtime.
8. Meals/snacks will be served at established times. Children will not be served food between meals.
9. Juice and milk will not be offered between meals, but water will be available at any time between meals.

### NUTRITION EDUCATION

1. Activities that focus on food and nutrition will be a regular part of the schedule.
2. Based on developmental level, some activities will involve handling, preparing, and tasting food.

### FUND RAISING

1. Food items sold for the purpose of fund-raising will meet the standards outlined in Attachment B.
2. Alternatives to food will be the focus of fundraising activities. Examples include a "Spring Fling" and selling gift wrap, flowers, greeting cards and the like.



## ► Frequently Asked Questions

**Q** *I have just finished the renewal process and received my approved renewal. Do I just file it away because I no longer need to do anything with it?*

**A** Once your renewal has been approved, you must keep it on file. However, the work is not done. As part of the management plan, you are required to complete a training plan indicating the training sessions that are to be held for day care staff. Training sessions must be conducted as prescribed in the training plan and the certification sheets completed and kept on file. These records are checked during an administrative review.

As a sponsor of more than one center, you are required to conduct the training sessions for your staff, as well as conduct the 3 reviews at each site during the year as outlined in the monitoring plan. The monitoring plan must be kept out and available so that reviews conducted can be recorded on the plan. Copies of the monitoring sheet will be submitted in next year's renewal packet. The monitoring sheet and individual reviews are checked when the State Agency or USDA conducts a program review. The monitoring sheet and plan is to be used as a management tool by the sponsoring organization.

**Q** *We submitted our master lists and eligibility forms for the new fiscal year. As we get new enrollees throughout the year, must we send these in to the office for review and approval?*

**A** No. Forms are collected at the beginning of the fiscal year so that the enrollment and eligibility numbers can be used to calculate reimbursement rates for October through June. Forms that are collected from new enrollees must be approved at the center, names and eligibility category added to the master list, and forms added to the file. The forms are not be sent to the State Agency office. The State Agency sees changes in the enrollment through the information submitted on the Claim for Reimbursement each month.

**Q** *The new fiscal year just started, so is this when I begin to plan ahead to meet the training requirements for our program?*

**A** Yes. With the beginning of Fiscal Year 2003, each program or sponsor participating in CACFP must attend a State Agency sponsored training session to meet the annual training requirements. This is necessary to be eligible to participate in the program for the next fiscal year. Training sessions will be held throughout the year with the annual conference being held in the spring in the Burlington area. Please watch the training calendar included in each newsletter and for mailings from the State Agency.

**Q** *We don't have much kitchen space. Is it OK if the cook prepares some of the food at home and then brings it to the daycare for a meal service?*

**A** Definitely not! This practice is not acceptable or allowable. Not only is there a concern for food safety, there is a liability issue for the daycare.



## ► Bulletin Board

### Income Eligibility Forms

Be sure to use the 2002-2003 Income Eligibility Forms and Guidelines to collect new income information for all participants for the new fiscal year that starts October 1, 2002.

**If you have questions about CACFP, you can reach Laurie directly by e-mail at [lcogan@doe.state.vt.us](mailto:lcogan@doe.state.vt.us)**

### Reminder!

Don't forget to make plans to meet your training requirements for FY03 that started October 1.

### Visit our Web Site!

[www.state.vt.us/educ/nutrition](http://www.state.vt.us/educ/nutrition)

### Newsletter Insert

We frequently answer questions about foods that count toward meeting the meal pattern requirements and also about CN (Child Nutrition) Labels. The insert provides information about both these topics.

### Special Events to Celebrate:

#### November

International Creative Child and Adult Month  
Child Safety and Protection Month  
National Native American Month  
Mickey Mouse's Birthday, November 18  
Declaration of the Rights of the Child, November 20  
Thanksgiving, November 28

#### December

First Day of Winter, December 21  
Kiwifruit Day, December 21  
Christmas, December 25  
Kwanzaa, Celebrated December 26 to January 1 of every year  
Hanukkah, November 30\* – December 7, 2002

### Making Every Bite Count

Did you miss the opportunity to participate in the "Making Every Bite Count" sessions last year? Now is your chance! This series of 5, day-long nutrition-oriented sessions will be made available again this year, this time at the Holiday Inn in Rutland. See the "calendar" on the back of this newsletter for dates and times. Check your mail for more information and registration materials.



## ► *Calendar of Events*

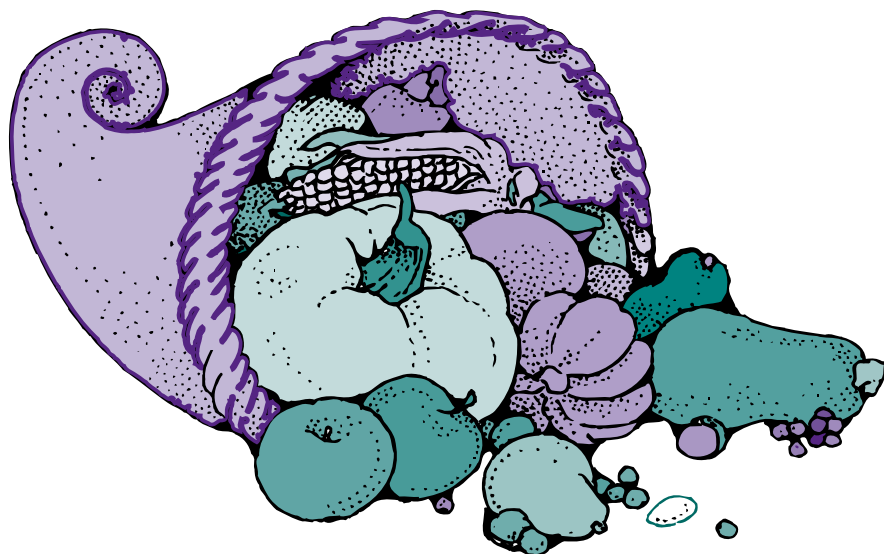
### **November 20, 2002**

#### **Quarterly Training for New CACFP Program Managers**

9:30 a.m. – 3:30 p.m.

Central Vermont Medical Center, Berlin

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